

MANCHESTER JOURNAL-ENQUIRER (CT)
8 March 1984

Ex-spy says CIA to blame for over 1 million deaths

By CAROLINE WILLSON
Staff Writer

MANCHESTER — The Central Intelligence Agency has run over 20,000 covert operations since it was founded 35 years ago — and more than 1 million people in third-world countries have died as a result, according to the highest-ranking case officer ever quit the CIA and call for its abolition.

John Stockwell, who headed the CIA Angola Task Force in the mid-1970s, chronicled a list of agency misdeeds to a Manchester Community College audience Wednesday.

And he maintained that unless Americans begin exerting pressure on their leaders to rein in the agency's activities in Central America and elsewhere, a major war is around the corner.

Raised in Texas and what was then the Belgian Congo, Stockwell joined the agency 20 years ago after military training in college. Describing his recruitment and training for the CIA, he said, "It was during the height of the domino theory, and we were invited to join the elite in the fight to stop the communist menace."

He said he later came to believe that no CIA operation in which he participated ever significantly advanced American national security interests.

Stockwell's career "moved well," and he soon found himself "chief of station" in West Africa, he told students. Though shaken by his indirect responsibility for the death of an African recruit, it was not until he was assigned to South Vietnam that he entertained serious doubts about the organization.

While Stockwell said his mission in Vietnam was "bloody," he added that it was less the violence he witnessed than the evidence of American "dishonor" that made him lay awake at nights when he returned to Texas after the fall of Saigon.

The agency's abandonment of its South Vietnamese employees to the enemy when the U.S. pulled out of the country was particularly "shameful," Stockwell said.

"We had dropped 25,000 tons of Agent Orange and one 500-pound bomb for every Vietnamese citizen, and my superiors were tell-

ing me that it was not our fault these people had the misfortune of being born Vietnamese," he recalled.

Stockwell said his decision finally to quit the CIA was based on the cynicism rife in the Angola operation — including what he charges was constant and criminal lying by top agency officials to the Congress, president and public.

He charged that the CIA used Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the New York senator who was then the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to create an impression of Soviet-backed aggression.

"In truth, we were escalating the fighting," Stockwell said. For the nine months he headed that operation, Stockwell said he never once heard CIA officials present a true picture of events in Angola.

He went on to charge that William Colby, the CIA's director at the time, lied repeatedly to congressional committees — denying, for example, that the agency was cooperating closely with South Africa, he said. Stockwell added that all of his attempts to provide accurate information to U.S. policymakers were thwarted by his superiors.

When he reported on the negative image of U.S.-hired mercenaries in Angola, Stockwell said his superior changed their titles to "foreign military technicians." Prostitutes recruited on the streets of Miami to sleep with Soviet embassy officials were dubbed "special access agents," he added.

After U.S.-supplied forces were "routed" and the CIA intervention in Angola was halted, the nation's new, ostensibly pro-Soviet leaders invited the Gulf Oil Corp. back to the country, Stockwell recalled. Cuban soldiers were put in the ironic position of protecting American technicians from U.S. mercenaries who continued to conduct free-lance attacks, he said.

Claiming the CIA has sponsored the overthrow of 18 democratically elected governments, Stockwell aired alleged abuses by the agency in such nations as China, Guatemala, Iran, Congo, Chile, Cuba and Guyana.

Officers in the CIA's Public Safety Pro-

gram in Latin American taught local secret police officers to torture detainees by practicing on innocent beggars until they died, he said.

Back in America, the agency slipped drugs such as LSD into drinks of unwitting individuals and water supplies of entire cities, he claimed, adding that the CIA also exposed large populations to diseases like whooping cough.

Because he disregarded his CIA secrecy oath in discussing these clandestine activities in a book he wrote in 1976 — "In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story" — Stockwell is now required to submit all his writings to CIA censors.

"The problem is how to police the police," he said, adding that CIA operatives "will never restrain themselves." Because they are hired to plan and implement aggressive destabilizing activities designed to "make the Russians look bad," he said CIA officers become "just as frustrated as the military in peacetime" if their operations are curtailed.

Stockwell wrapped up his speech by calling for public pressure on American policymakers to end a cycle of "paranoia and aggression," recalling that such protest helped bring about an end to the Vietnam war.

"If Americans let our leaders take away our rights, we have no one to blame but ourselves," he warned.